



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS
Washington, D.C. 20231
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/868,620	06/25/2001	Hisaji Matsui	010756	1040

23850 7590 12/18/2002

ARMSTRONG, WESTERMAN & HATTORI, LLP
1725 K STREET, NW.
SUITE 1000
WASHINGTON, DC 20006

EXAMINER

LISH, PETER J

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
----------	--------------

1754

7

DATE MAILED: 12/18/2002

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/868,620

Applicant(s)

MATSUI ET AL.

Examiner

Peter J Lish

Art Unit

1754

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 20 November 2002.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-19 and 27 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 11-19 and 27 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-10 and 27 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☒ Claim(s) 11-19 are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Traversal of the initial restriction requirement is accepted. As a result, a new restriction requirement, which uses the proper rules regarding Unity of Invention, is made.

Election/Restrictions

Restriction is required under 35 U.S.C. 121 and 372.

This application contains the following inventions or groups of inventions which are not so linked as to form a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1.

In accordance with 37 CFR 1.499, applicant is required, in reply to this action, to elect a single invention to which the claims must be restricted.

Group I, claim(s) 1-10 and 27, drawn to an amorphous carbon nanotube.

Group II, claim(s) 11-12, drawn to a method of storing gas

Group III, claim(s) 13-19, drawn to a method of producing amorphous carbon nanotubes

The inventions listed as Groups I-III do not relate to a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1 because, under PCT Rule 13.2, they lack the same or corresponding special technical features for the following reasons: The feature which links the above groups is an amorphous carbon nanotube, as defined by claim 1. However, this amorphous carbon nanotube is not the applicant's contribution over the prior art, and thus does not serve as a special technical feature.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. It is not clear what is meant by the language of claim 2. Is it meant that the interlayer spacing of the nanotube walls is less than the diameter of the tube?

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1-8 and 27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Kyotani et al. ("Preparation of Ultrafine Carbon Tubes...").

Kyotani et al. disclose carbon nanotubes with a d_{002} interlayer spacing value of 3.54 Angstroms and a diameter of 230 nm. The tubes are hollow cylindrical tubes which are open at both ends. The tubes are grown in a porous anodic aluminum oxide film. These tube diameters correspond to the channel diameters of the anodic oxide film, the lengths correspond with the thickness of the film, and the tubes generally maintain the straight character of the channels.

Art Unit: 1754

Kyotani does not directly teach the diffraction angle or the 2-theta band half-width of the nanotubes. However, because the interlayer spacing of the tubes is equivalent with the claimed value, and because the diffraction angle and 2-theta band half-width are dependent on this property, it is expected that these values are accordingly equivalent with the applicant's claimed range.

The intended use of claim 8 does not limit the claim, it requires nothing beyond the material of claim 1.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 9-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kyotani et al. as applied to claims 1-8 above, and further in view of Hibino (Japanese Patent JP-410072201-A).

Kyotani et al. do not teach a process of using the carbon nanotubes as a gas-storage system in so far as this limits the product claimed. However, he does note that because the tubes are open on both ends, the encapsulation of other material into the tubes would be very easy.

Hibino teaches a process of using carbon nanotubes with a coating film of a metal or alloy having function to dissociate hydrogen molecules into hydrogen atoms on the surface of the material. Platinum, palladium, or a hydrogen storage alloy is preferably used.

Art Unit: 1754

It would be obvious to one of ordinary skill, given the teaching that the nanotubes of Kyotani et al. may easily encapsulate other materials, to use to nanotubes of Kyotani in the application of Hibino et al., in order to provide a carbonaceous material suitable for hydrogen storage.


Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Peter J Lish whose telephone number is 703-308-1772. The examiner can normally be reached on 9:00-6:00 Monday through Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Stanley Silverman can be reached on 703-308-3837. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703-872-9310 for regular communications and 703-305-9311 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-0661.

PL
December 12, 2002


STUART L. HENDRICKSON
PRIMARY EXAMINER